

INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC ACADEMY

2nd INTERNATIONAL SESSION  
FOR OLYMPIC MEDALLISTS

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PROCEEDINGS



ANCIENT OLYMPIA



*Commemorative seal of the Session*

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INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC ACADEMY

2nd INTERNATIONAL SESSION FOR OLYMPIC MEDALLISTS

SPECIAL SUBJECT:

*THE SOCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL ROLE OF ATHLETES  
DURING AND AFTER ELITE COMPETITION*

ANCIENT OLYMPIA



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## FOREWORD

The 2nd International Session for Olympic Medallists was organised by the International Olympic Academy from 14th to 20th of July 2009 in its facilities in Ancient Olympia. Responding to the wish expressed by Olympic Medallists two years before, the IOA decided to select as this Session's special theme: *"The social and professional life of athletes during and after elite competition"*.

As the number of participants is limited, the Ephoria of the IOA decided to invite alongside the Olympic Medallists, active athletes who have competed in the Olympic Games. Consequently, 29 athletes (20 men and 9 women) from 22 countries attended the Session's work. Most of them belonged to the 30-39 and 50-59 age group. 67.7% came from a European country, 8.3% from America and 25% represented the African continent. It is also worth noting that the Session's participants were of a very high educational level with 63.2% of them holding a university degree and 21.1% a post-graduate degree. The Session was also attended by the Director of the IOC's International Cooperation and Development Department Mr T.A. Ganda Sithole, as well as 4 observers from Mediterranean countries within the context of a closer cooperation with the ICMG.

All participants followed the lectures of five distinguished speakers that had been brilliantly prepared and who contributed with their scientific expertise to the high level of the Session. The topics which they developed were strongly appreciated by participants as they responded to their immediate interests and included new elements and ideas thus encouraging creative thinking. As a result, participants took active part in the discussions, contributing with their interventions to the exchange of new views and ideas.

The lecturers who participated in the Session were Professors Konstantinos Georgiadis (GRE) and Manfred Lämmer (GER), the IOA President Isidoros Kou-

velos (GRE) and the Olympic Medallists Sophia Bekatorou (GRE) and Guin Batten (GBR).

The lectures focused on Olympic education, the ancient and modern athlete and his educational role, the importance of the Youth Olympic Games and the cultural and educational value of the Olympic Games.

In addition to the lectures, participants had the opportunity of developing their views in discussion groups. They all agreed that the way in which the discussion was organised encouraged the participation of all attendees and contributed to a better understanding of the objectives and scientific conclusions and improved their knowledge of the debate subjects.

The Session's organisation was outstanding in the opinion of participants; the printed material they received was complete, accomodations were excellent and the IOA's staff was always ready to help.

Participants noted that the Session's level and the volume of knowledge imparted fully met with their expectations and that this knowledge would help them significantly to propagate the Olympic Ideal in their country.

On the whole, we could say that the 2nd Session for Olympic Medallists was a success. Participants were satisfied with the arrangements, the thematic units that were developed, the lecturers and working group coordinators.

The aim of the IOA is to ensure the largest possible participation of Olympic Medallists and Olympic athletes in the Sessions, which it guarantees will continue and expand. The IOA believes that the athletes are the most suitable persons for conveying the Olympic spirit to young people.

Assoc. Prof. Konstantinos GEORGIADIS

*IOA Honorary Dean*

**Opening Ceremony  
of the 2nd International Session  
for Olympic Medallists  
ANCIENT OLYMPIA, 15th July 2009**



*Commemorative photo at the marble stairs.*

**ADDRESS AND OPENING**  
**of the works of the Session**  
**by the President of the International Olympic Academy,**  
**Isidoros KOUVELOΣ**

Dear friends and participants of the 2nd International Session for Olympic Medalists,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to Greece, the country that gave birth to the Olympic Ideal and has made the maxim “a healthy mind in a healthy body” a way of life by bequeathing to the rest of the world values like fair play and sportsmanship.

I am particularly happy because, during my first term as the President of the IOA, I have the honour to welcome at the historic site of Ancient Olympia great Olympic victors whose performances are written in letters of gold in the history of the modern Olympic Movement.

This Session is a major event for the Academy as it offers an opportunity to athletes-Olympic medallists of the whole world to meet not in the sports arena but in the serene and peaceful setting of the Academy in order to debate philosophical issues in a place where memory and history awaken our senses.

I believe that this Session’s theme is extremely important since the scientific presentations and discussions of the following days will highlight the issues that preoccupy the international sports community, regarding the objectives of modern sport that wants the athlete to be closely associated with the idea of constantly improving his/her physical techniques and human capabilities.

The Olympic medallist is the worshipped protagonist of the Olympic Games, the oldest and most popular sports event of the ancient and modern world. He



*From the Opening Ceremony of the Session. Reading of Pierre de Coubertin writings by the Olympic Medallists at the Coubertin grove (on the top) and laying of wreath at the Coubertin stele by the Olympic Medallists (at the bottom) (from left to right): Maria Olaru (ROU), Petros Galaktopoulos (GRE), Jan Kurka (CZE), Inga Babakova (UKR) and Jefferson Perez (ECU).*





*Laying of wreath at the Ioannis Ketseas and Carl Diem monument by the Olympic Medallists (from left to right): Marion Rodewald (GER), Filbert Bayi (TAN) and Sophia Bekatorou (GRE).*

fascinates and delights spectators through his continuous quest for first place, thus becoming an idol, a hero, in the eyes of spectators and youth and sponsors' golden boy and a transnational iconic figure.

We can ask ourselves, after Olympic victory how does society see the social role of this special human being, how does it perceive his educational role? What kind of life does he have? Which is his substantial contribution? What was the price he had to pay for making it to the podium? What is the cost when the public rejects and marginalizes him if he is caught in shame because of a practice that destroys careers and sullies the sports ideal? Why does an athlete choose the easy, but destructive path of doping? We all know that pressure for distinctions is enormous. It is unquestionably in you the athletes who have been deprived from the joys of life at an early age, who have to spend more than 10 hours each day in the stadiums and training centres, trying to break as many records as possible that we have invested and placed our hopes and dreams. Could the granting of incentives and privileges of all kinds, which are now being demonized, be the reason for



*Commemorative photos at the Pierre de Coubertin stele (on the top)  
and in front of the Conference Hall (at the bottom).*



which they resort to the use of anabolic steroids? The answer to these questions is not an easy one, maybe because, according to prominent scientists, “professional athletes are beyond good and evil”.

Wherever they may be though, one thing is certain: when they climb on the podium they become archangels and peacemakers, eternal symbols in our hearts and lives, which “defy war bulletins and lead us to peace through their victories”.

Sport is a source of life. At the end of the day, promoting the values, ethics and public policies that underpin an honest, pure and doping-free sport is an obligation we all share. Any form of sport should be encouraged by all means and by all so that the budding Olympic medallists can be nurtured with the values and ideals that only sport can offer. We are a country which because of its sports history is called upon to defend the values and ideals of sports.

Dear friends, I wish every success to the works of this Session and I am convinced that you shall all have an opportunity to express your views and consider different aspects related to the dimensions of Olympic medallists’ social and professional life during, as well as after the end of their career.

Thank you very much.



*The participants and the guests are standing for the Olympic anthem in the conference hall.*



*On the panel from left to right: the IOA Director Prof. Dionyssi Gangas, the IOA President Isidoros Kouvelos and the IOA Honorary Dean Prof. Konstantinos Georgiadis.*

**Works  
of the 2nd International Session  
for Olympic Medallists**

*Lectures*

- The opinions of the lecturers do not necessarily reflect those of the International Olympic Academy.
- Out of respect for multiculturalism and diversity of scientific research, we do not intervene in every lecturer's personal way of presenting his/her bibliography and footnotes.



## OLYMPIC EDUCATION: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



**Assoc. Prof. Konstantinos GEORGIADIS (GRE)**

*University of Peloponnese*

*Honorary Dean of the International Olympic Academy*

*“Olympism did not come to the world spontaneously...  
There is a whole historical preamble that must be taken into account.”<sup>1</sup>  
Pierre de Coubertin, 1934*

### Ancient Olympia’s Educational Symbolism

In the beautiful archaeological site of Olympia when looking for its significance even today one can feel the moralizing spirit, which it sends out to visitors.

Following the sacred procession way, the same way that priests and athletes followed in ancient times during the ceremonies, we can see the ancient Gymnasium and the Palestra, two edifices that refer us to education, culture and character-building as a means of elevating the soul by exercising the mind and the body.

On the other side of the sacred way, visitors could see the imposing Western pediment of Zeus’ temple on which the battle between the Centaurs and the Lapiths was depicted.

The Centaurs, symbols of the irrational (not endowed with reason) – half ani-

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1. Pierre de Coubertin, “L’Olympisme a` l’e`cole. Il faut l’encourager”, in: *La Revue Sportive illustre`e*, vol. 30, 1934, special issue, p. 36, in: N. Müller, *Pierre de Coubertin 1863-1937, Olympism, Selected Writings*, Lausanne, IOC, 2000, p. 218.

mal (horse) and half man, dominated by their bestial instincts are attacking the Lapith women.

The god Apollo in the middle of the representation, with his right hand raised expressed the divine command that fairness and reason should prevail over the irrational.

The representation conveyed its own educational message to men. It reminded them that justice is linked with logic, the development and application of their virtues and the mastering of their passions.

Further away, pilgrims walked around the Olympic Boule where athletes, their parents and siblings took the oath that they would compete fairly in front of the statue of Zeus.

Only those who because of their education were considered capable of observing the rules of fair competition were allowed to take part in the competition. The competition rules, the laws, oral traditions and prevailing customs, would determine the ethical and social framework of fair play.

As they continued to walk, pilgrims passed in front of the temple of Zeus. On the East pediment they could see the chariot race between Oenomaos and Pelops that symbolized the change of generations. A new generation came to replace the old one in the course of natural evolution and no human force could stop this change. Even today, the games remain a symbolic festival of youth, the world's flower.

Before entering the Stadium, pilgrims came face to face with the Zanes, shameful reminders of those who had violated the Olympic rules of fair play, but at the same time also a warning to any future transgressors. The message was clear: transgressors should feel ashamed for not having the proper education that would allow them to participate in the contests of civilized human beings.

After all this, mentally and physically prepared the athletes and spectators would enter the Stadium through the Crypt in order to compete or watch the games.

If by the term Education<sup>2</sup> we mean erudition, training, culture and humanism as its distinctive traits, then the ceremonial of the ancient Olympic Games in the

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2. *Papyrus Larousse Britannika*, ed. To Vima, vol. 47, p. 339.

precinct of the Sacred Altis and surrounding areas was a first form of “Olympic education” for athletes, spectators and pilgrims.

It is within this conceptual framework that Pierre de Coubertin refers to education in his writings. He mostly uses the term “athletic education”<sup>3</sup> or “Olympic Pedagogy”<sup>4</sup>. In both cases Coubertin underlines the educational, social and cultural parameters of the concepts: “It can easily be shown that among a great many people – not all – the athletic instinct is present, even right from their very origins. Is this Olympism? Not at all. In order for Olympism to become manifest, the athletic instinct must be surrounded by esthetic and moral concerns, as well. It must invite philosophy to arbitrate its competitions, and in some way the national religion must act as a backdrop”<sup>5</sup>.

Olympism for Coubertin as a philosophy of life was a spiritual, mental and physical life experience in man’s constant effort to achieve moral and intellectual elevation.

Well ahead of his time in thought and in action – in conjunction with the creation of a Chair of Olympic Studies in Nice – he advocated in favor of the teaching of Olympism in education<sup>6</sup>.

Predominant in Coubertin’s thinking was the Olympic educational framework of holistic education, the concurrent development of man’s spiritual, intellectual and physical qualities.

His Olympic pedagogical programme as presented in his work was multifaceted, interdisciplinary, inter-thematic, with precise social, cultural and humanitarian objectives.

His Olympic Pedagogy included:

Athletic Education<sup>7</sup>, Education for Peace<sup>8</sup>, Social Education (Democracy re-

3. *Pierre de Coubertin 1863-1937, Olympism, Selected Writings*, N. Müller (ed.), Lausanne, IOC, 2000, p. 149.

4. *P. de Coubertin, Selected Writings*, op. cit., p. 217.

5. *P. de Coubertin, Selected Writings*, op. cit., p. 218.

6. *P. de Coubertin, Selected Writings*, op. cit., p. 218.

7. *P. de Coubertin, Selected Writings*, op. cit., p. 121.

8. *P. de Coubertin, Selected Writings*, op. cit., p. 135.

quires Social Education)<sup>9</sup>, Historical Background, Philosophy of Physical Education Culture, Art in Education<sup>10</sup>, Sports Psychology (in Modern world who engages in sports and why)<sup>11</sup>, Education to hygiene, From games to heroic acts, Formation of Character, Modern Chivalry, Apotheosis.

His concern about the future of the Olympic Games and later developments in sport, made him coin and define a new term that of “Olympic Pedagogy”<sup>12</sup> based on “the worship of effort and the worship of eurhythmia”.

According to Coubertin Olympic pedagogy required: “... permanent factories. The Olympic factory of the ancient world was the gymnasium. The Olympiads (sic) have been reviewed but the gymnasium of antiquity has not-as yet. It must be!”<sup>13</sup>

Coubertin did not live to witness what he had dreamed of, the revival of the ancient gymnasium, as a permanent workshop of Olympic Pedagogy.

Only few people would have probably realized then that his ideas were the first seeds of Olympic education.

His vision became reality many decades later.

In 1961, “the ancient gymnasium” began its operation in Ancient Olympia as the legacy of Coubertin’s ideas under the name of International Olympic Academy, the outcome of a long cooperation between Carl Diem and John Ketseas.

Through the IOA’s educational activities, the concept of Olympic education gradually found a practical application in education.

After 1968, with the creation of Centers of Olympic Studies and National Olympic Academies, Olympic education programmes were progressively introduced in many countries.

At the Olympic Games of Munich, Olympic experimental education programmes were implemented in Germany by former participants and lecturers at the IOA’s sessions.

9. *P. de Coubertin, Selected Writings*, op. cit., p. 149.

10. *P. de Coubertin, Selected Writings*, op. cit., p. 155.

11. *P. de Coubertin, Selected Writings*, op. cit., p. 141.

12. *P. de Coubertin, Selected Writings*, op. cit., p. 217.

13. *P. de Coubertin, Selected Writings*, op. cit., p. 217.

This programme was presented at the IOA in 1972 under the title “The propagation of Olympic Principles in Schools”<sup>14</sup>.

The first clear attempt to define and circumscribe the concept of “Olympic education” as established worldwide was made by the late President of the IOA, Nikolaos Nissiotis, at the 20th International Session for Young Participants in 1980. Speaking on the subject “Olympic Education Problems” he clearly highlighted its main components: a) historic legacy, b) its humanitarian context and c) its contemporary philosophical heritage and pedagogical objectives<sup>15</sup>.

Since the mid-eighties, the term Olympic education started being used in many countries as a result, in particular, of the IOA sessions for Directors of National Olympic Academies, inaugurated in 1986, but also as a result of the NOAs activities in their respective countries.

Even today, the term Olympic education remains the main topic at the IOA’s sessions for Directors of National Olympic Academies. Through the lectures and discussions in the working groups the concept of Olympic education is described as follows:

Olympic Education shares the objectives of the Olympic Movement. It is a multilevel educational process, which is a part of general education with different targets of population, in order to teach Olympic values through sport and culture<sup>16</sup>.

Olympic Education is a dynamic process that addresses social, mental, cultural, ethical and physical development. Sport is the core of this education to raise the young to become mentally and physically balanced, cooperative, tolerant and peace abiding citizens who apply the rules of fair play in their daily lives<sup>17</sup>.

Through Olympic Education the individual should acquire a philosophy of life

14. E. Lauerbach, “The propagation of Olympic principles in schools”, in: *Report of the 12th Session of the International Olympic Academy, Olympia 12-30 July 1972*, H.O.C., Athens 1972, pp. 98-107.

15. N. Nissiotis, “Problems of Olympic Education”, in: *Report of the 20th Session of the International Olympic Academy, Olympia June 1980*, Athens, H.O.C., 1981, pp. 41-51.

16. “Conclusions of the Discussion Groups at the 5th International Session of the IOA for Presidents or Directors of NOAs and Officials of NOCs”, in: *Report on the I.O.A.’s Special Session and Seminars 2000*, Athens, IOA, 2001, p. 566.

17. “Conclusions at the 5th Session for Presidents of NOAs and Officials of NOCs”, op. cit., p. 563.

that she/he becomes a positive contributing member of his/her family, community, country, the world<sup>18</sup>.

## Olympic Pedagogy

Olympic education is a process of educating and developing the individual according to universal values and ideals of Olympism. The principles and values of Olympism as special life attitudes and behaviors can be understood, accepted and assimilated by means of a pedagogical approach, notably through sporting and cultural activities.

Olympism is considered as an anthropological philosophy, an idealistic approach to and perception of the human being<sup>19</sup>. The power of the human mind's creative imagination is the source that gives birth to his ideals and his social and intellectual elevation. The anthropological philosophy of Olympism describes the ideas, the constants that ideologically will guide man in his search for perfection. So we have the ideas and what we now need is a theory of Olympic Pedagogy. However, in order to arrive at an educational proposition for Olympic Education, these ideas will have to be organised and condensed within the context of an educational ideology, so as to conform to the curriculum, improve the physical education programme with new elements and be ideas that the children can understand<sup>20</sup>.

Since the beginning of the last decade, after a period of educational experimentation and enquiry, the fundamental principles of Olympic Pedagogy are now being systematically presented. Apart from a few minor deviations, the views of the main proponents of Olympic Pedagogy coincide<sup>21</sup>.

18. "Conclusions at the 5th Session for Presidents of NOAs and Officials of NOCs", op. cit., p. 569.

19. See V. Girginov, J. Parry, *The Olympic Games Explained. A Student Guide to the Evolution of the Modern Olympic Games*, London & New York 2005.

20. See K. Georgiadis, "The Olympic Education Programme of ATHOC 2004 and the Hellenic Ministry of Education", in: *Report of the 45th International Session of the IOA for Young Participants, Ancient Olympia 27 July-11 August 2005*, Athens, IOA, 2006, pp. 115-136.

21. See Grupe, O., "Olympismus und olympische Erziehung. Abschied von einer grossen Idee?", in: O.

The basic ideas of Olympic Pedagogy that guide the Olympic Education programme implemented in Greece for the Athens 2004 Olympic Games can be summarized in the following proposals:

- Balanced and harmonious development of the intellectual, mental and physical virtues of man. Integrated training of the individual.
- The idea of moving from *Agon* to *Athlos*: overcoming man's irrational and antisocial tendencies.
- The idea of truce as a life attitude.
- The idea of multiculturalism: a civilization of cultures.
- The idea of voluntary disinterested participation.
- The idea of the festival of the youth of humanity.
- The idea of shaping a democratic conscience.

In the last two decades, many Olympic education programmes have been developed by the International Olympic Academy, National Olympic Academies, Organising Committees of Olympic Games, a number of educational institutions, governmental and non governmental institutions, Museums, etc.

These programmes explain how Olympic education can be implemented by means of teaching programmes. We need, however, to continue dialogue and research on the main question, i.e. to what extent sport and Olympic education could become a vehicle for moral and social education.

Existing Olympic education programmes basically rely on pedagogical ideas that arise from:

- a) The idealistic pedagogical approach regarding sport's educational value as expressed by the ancient Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle. The mental and physical composition and integrity of human existence lies in the

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Grupe (Ed.), *Olympischer Sport – Rückblick und Perspektiven*, Schorndorf: Hofmann, 1997, pp. 223-243, N. Müller, "Olympische Erziehung", in: O. Grupe & D. Mieth (Eds), *Lexikon der Ethik im Sport*, Schorndorf: Hofmann, 1998, pp. 385-395, R. Naul, "Von der Pädagogik des Olympismus zur Didaktik der olympischen Erziehung", in: NOK (Ed.), *Olympische Erziehung. Eine Herausforderung an Sportpädagogik und Sportsport*, St Augustin: Academia, 2004, pp. 113-130 and Girginov, Parry, *The Olympic Games Explained*, op. cit.

center of the educational process for character building and the individual's elevation. Key concepts in the above process are measure, harmony, balance, serenity and fair play.

- b) The enrichment and universalisation of Olympism' educational principles as expressed by Coubertin essentially through pedagogy, interdisciplinarity, internationalism, truce, democracy and multiculturalism.
- c) Olympism's present socio-cultural educational approach, which is linked with the Olympic Games. This educational approach enhances the educational messages of the Olympic Charter, the Olympic volunteer movement, Olympic tourism, the symbolic power of Olympic symbols, the educational impact of the mass media, the Olympic Village.

## Methodology

The methodology for the implementation of Olympic education programmes is usually based on three main teaching methods.

- a) Learning activities, which are mostly contained in the Olympic education manuals. In this material one can find references to the history of the Olympic Movement, the Olympic principles and the Olympic symbols, the Olympic Charter, etc.  
This material consists of films, books, electronic publications, video tapes, board games, etc.
- b) Artistic activities, including such creative activities as modeling, painting, sculpture, sketching, artistic creation, drama, dance, song, music. The combination of visual and cultural activities, the creation of an Olympic corner or Olympic museum in the school promotes it as a center of cultural creation.
- c) Kinetic activities are the core of Olympic education. They include all activities that take the form of a contest or game, as well as other kinetic activities through which young people acquire inter-social skills and experience the Olympic principles.

The practical application of Olympic education is usually achieved by combining the three methods during school events and visits to museums and archaeological sites.

According to R. Naul<sup>22</sup> Olympic education in school includes four learning stages: motor skills, inter-social skills, moral behavior and Olympic knowledge.

OLYMPISM

E D U C A T I O N		Stand	Actions	Orientation	Ideas	A T T O W I T H U R D E S
	Motor Skills	Will to compete	Performance Demonstration	Fair play	Agon	
	Inter-social Skills	Looking for role models	Life-long learning	Promoting solidarity	Athlos	
	Moral Behavior	Accepting values	Observing rules	Hospitality (Filoxenia, Friendship to foreigners)	Truce (Ekecheiria)	
	Olympic Knowledge	Understanding ideals	Possessing knowledge	Comparing principles and reality	Olympic Games (The festival of the youth of humanity -A civilization of cultures)	LIFE

Matrix for Olympic Education published by R. Naul and modified by K. Georgiadis.

**Conclusions**

The Olympic Games today are certainly identified much more with entertainment, television and scandals than with education and character building. Through Olympic education programmes we can enhance once again the true meaning of the Games.

22. Naul R., "Die integrierte olympische Erziehung: Ein konzept für Schule und Sportverein", in: *Stadion*, vol. 29, 2003, p. 295.

Olympic education promotes the moral, social and educational principles of the humanistic Olympic Movement. It encourages creative competition as a condition for attaining higher goals.

Moreover, through sporting, social and cultural activities it breeds concerned active citizens who can be useful to society.

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## THE CLASSICAL AND THE MODERN OLYMPIC ATHLETE: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES



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Dear Olympic Medallists,

Please first allow me some brief remarks to prevent any misunderstandings and false expectations. First of all, we have to determine that *the* athlete as such neither existed in Greek Antiquity nor in the Modern Age. A competitor at the Olympic Games in the Classical Age differs substantially from the one in the Hellenistic Epoch and the Roman Empire, respectively, in terms of social origin and status. Nor can the Olympic participants of the early decades of the 20th Century be compared with either the state funded “Diplomats in Tracksuits” during the “Cold War”, nor with those who, today, battle for Gold, Silver and Bronze on the stage of a global media event.

Indeed, the term “classical” also needs to be defined in greater detail. I understand the “Classical Age” as the time from the start of the Persian wars through to Macedonia’s rise to world power under Philipp II, which brought about the end of the autonomous City State, the Polis. Expressed in numbers, this means 500-350 BC.

My comments will focus on describing five selected typical characteristics of the athletes of this age. However, I will not compare these with the high-performance athletes of our time in each and every point. After all, I am speaking to a circle of Olympic Medal Winners, who hardly need to have a university professor explain how the modern athlete differed from their predecessors 2,500 years ago. I see

my primary task as that of providing hypotheses and ideas for the subsequent discussion.

## 1. The Classical Athlete was an Aristocrat

Let us now start with the subject by addressing the central topic, which is also contained in the heading. I mean the word *athlete*. This comes from the Greek and has found its way into numerous languages. We can find an interesting reference to its original meaning in Homer's *Odyssey*, which was finally completed at the end of the 8th century BC.

Odysseus, one of the heroes of the Trojan War, roams the seas for ten long years and ends up on the island of the mythical people of the Phaeacians. There, the King's son challenges him to a contest. When he points out that his body has been weakened as a result of the shipwreck and that he is still in mourning for his fallen companions, and then asks to be allowed not to enter the contest, Euryalos, another Phaeacian, shouts at him: "You are indeed not an athlete, rather you are a merchant, who is travelling the seas with only profit in mind!"

It is at this point and in this general context that we encounter the word *athlete* for the first time in a written testimony. The challenger is disappointed by the stranger's reaction and doubts his aristocratic origin. For a man, who refuses to compete – whatever the reason may be – cannot be a "man of nobility".

Participation in the contests was a central demand of early Greek aristocratic ethics. By succeeding in contests and in war (we will return to the link between these two fields at a later point) the young aristocrat aspired to fame and honour among his contemporaries for posterity. Indeed, since he did not believe in a worthy life after death, the whole meaning of life had to be fulfilled in the short time that was available in this world.

Euryalos' words were primarily a social insult aimed at shattering Odysseus' sense of honour to the "very roots". This is why they do not fail their goal: Despite his lamentable situation and his advanced age, he jumps up and throws a discus

heavier than those that the Phaeacian competitors had earlier thrown, further than all others.

This nice little story aims to highlight a first characteristic trait of the athlete in the dawn of Greek history. He is a member of the aristocracy, financially independent, and with time on his hands, a member of the “leisure class”, who can be compared with those in *Victorian England*, where, as is well known, modern sport began. The close ties between the classical contests and the aristocracy are above all highlighted by the horse and chariot races commissioned by the rich horse breeders in central Greece and Sicily.

As from the middle of the fifth century, athletes increasingly appear from the new middle class, which could indeed be compared with the *European Bourgeoisie* in the second half of the 19th century. This class had become wealthy and affluent as a result of the Greek colonisation and the expansion of trade, and had acquired political influence. However, their values were orientated in practically all fields of life, towards the traditional, aristocratic role model.

Only towards the end of the fourth century, when Alexander the Great subjected the whole eastern Mediterranean to his rule, did the social barriers begin to fall. The competing city states, rivals, which had lost their political autonomy and military capacity, made the most of all the opportunities for recruiting and promoting talent. Ever more athletes now came from the lower social strata and made their living as professional athletes.

The modern *Olympic Movement* has developed similarly. While most of the Olympic competitors came from middle class backgrounds before the Second World War, above all, young university students, after 1952 the so-called “state amateurs” of the socialist countries and the athletes from the so-called “Third World” drastically changed the picture. Nevertheless, there are still sports today that are characterised by a relatively high social level.

## 2. The Classical Athlete was a Warrior

The second characteristic trait of the Olympic athlete in Classical Age will certainly surprise you. He is an athlete *and* a warrior. In most cases, the fact that the much praised Greek educational institution, the *gymnasium*, had developed in the 6th century BC as a place of military exercise. Athletics was born of military training. Only those who attended a *gymnasium* were given civil rights in Athens and were allowed to compete as free Greeks at the great *Panhellenic Games*, and in particular at the *Olympic Games*. This fact is confirmed in numerous reports by ancient historians. And so, Antiquity's most well known athlete ever, the wrestler Milo of Croton, who won six times in a row at the *Olympic Games*, then dressed as Heracles and equipped with a cudgel and a lion's coat, led an army from his city into battle against neighbouring Sybaris. His compatriot Phayllos, who in the pentathlon at the *Pythian Games* in Delphi had jumped a record distance of 55 feet, and so – much as Bob Beamon in Mexico – had jumped over and beyond the “sandbox”, came to assist the Athenians as the commander of a battleship, when these – abandoned by all the Greeks – destroyed the Persian's superior fleet in the naval battle near Salamis in 480 BC.

When a Spartan was asked what he considered to be the greatest reward, if he were to win in Olympia, is said to have answered: the honour of being allowed to go into battle in the front row, next to his king.

The philosopher Plato, who had a negative attitude towards athletics and exclusively advocated the state's gymnastic training for defending the Polis, bemoaned as early as at the end of the fifth century that many athletes had turned their participation in contests into their primary preoccupation and had become unfit for military service as a result of their specific lifestyle.

The ancient *pentathlon* with its disciplines, discus, long jump, javelin, running and wrestling, which had so often been invoked as an expression of a harmonious educational ideal, was originally a test of military versatility. When Pierre de Coubertin conceived the *Modern Pentathlon*, which was included in the Olympic programme for the first time ever in Stockholm 1912, it was the role model of the

complete athlete, an officer, that he had in mind. And, indeed, the new versatility contest made up of riding, fencing, shooting, swimming and running, was a domain of the military and the police until well after the Second World War. This conception of Pierre de Coubertin's seems, at first glance, to contradict the idea of the *Olympic Movement*, namely of contributing to international understanding, to promoting peace and preventing violence, but corresponds with the image of the athlete in Classical Antiquity. Let us not forget that when the First World War broke out, the Baron, himself, rather than sending an appeal for peace to the governments, instead joined the French Army for military service as a volunteer, because he considered this to be his patriotic duty. When he was not accepted, he withdrew to Switzerland, bitterly disappointed. Now, you also know how it came that the IOC has, to this very day, its headquarters in Lausanne, on the banks of Lake Geneva.

### 3. The Classical Athlete was a Male

Since I am holding the paper in English, I have always spoken of the "athlete", since this is of neutral gender. Had I held it in Greek, French or German, I would only have been able to use the male form for Antiquity, but for the Modern Age, the male *and* female form. For the Classical athlete was a man.

In Ancient Greece, the social roles of the sexes were clearly defined: Men were responsible for politics, business and all public matters, while women dedicated themselves to the household and child care and rearing. While their education was limited to elementary lessons in reading and writing, men received a full and comprehensive physical and intellectual training in the *gymnasium* in order to be able to fulfil all their social tasks and responsibilities.

However, since women neither attended a *gymnasium* nor contributed to defending the Polis, they did not take part in public contests. During the *Olympic Games*, women were actually prohibited from being present in the stadium for cultic reasons, meaning that they could not even – as elsewhere – watch the contests. Even a series of curiosities fails to do anything to change this fundamental

exclusion of women from ancient sport. For example, the races by Elean girls held in Olympia once every four years (although not during the *Olympic Games*), was not really a contest, but rather a cultic *ritual*. Hence, here lies a decisive difference between the athletes of antiquity and those of our times. At the founding of the modern *Olympic Games*, hardly anybody thought of women participating, and Pierre de Coubertin, least of all, who had fought vehemently against this all his life long. Women did not fit into the role model of an “Olympic Officer” that he imagined. When he stood down from his office as IOC President at the *Olympic Congress* in Prague in 1925, the decision taken by his IOC colleagues to allow women to compete in track and field events for the first time in Amsterdam 1928 played an important role. He rightly recognised that this resolution by the *Olympic Movement* opened the door towards a new future.

In an open letter to the competitors gathered in the Dutch capital, he wrote: “These Games are no longer my Games”, and thereafter never again attended the festival that he had, himself, founded.

The participation of women in the modern *Olympic Games* is not a self-evident achievement, but rather is the result of a long and drawn out struggle carried out against the background of major social developments of the 20th century. Pierre de Coubertin and his contemporaries would hardly have considered it possible for 40% of the competitors taking part in London in 2012 to have been female and that women – with but some few exceptions – were able to compete in all.

#### 4. The Classical Athlete was Greek

In the sense of Pierre de Coubertin’s call for “All Games - All Nations”, internationality and universality are the fundamental principles of the *Olympic Movement*. Contestants from all around the world take part in the modern *Olympic Games*, without discrimination on grounds of race, religion, nationality, or sex. At the games in ancient Olympia, however, only Greeks could compete. Right from the beginning of the competitions, the athlete had to swear an oath that he

is descended from free Greek parents. In cases of doubt, a relative, coach or other companion would have to vouch for this. All non Greeks, who were called Barbarians, were excluded from the games.

When King Alexander I of Macedonia wanted to compete in the stade race, the classical sprint distance in 500 BC, the fellow competitors protested by arguing that he was not a Greek. Only after a longer discussion and with the help of a questionable genealogical construct did the organisers succeed in gaining the King's qualification for the race, thereby avoiding a political affront.

So, those who assembled in Olympia were those who already belonged to a relatively homogenous, firmly embedded linguistic, cultural and cultic community and celebrated their identity. However, the fact must not be overlooked that the athletes came from more than 300 rival city states that not infrequently waged bitter wars against each other. Although the ancient games were not international, they were an "interstate" affair.

In the Classical Age, the athlete was proud of representing his Polis before the eyes of 40,000 spectators from throughout the Greek world. When he was proclaimed the victor by the *Hellanodikai*, his own name, the name of his father and of his home town was called out. These details were also inscribed on the base of the statue, which he was allowed to erect in the holy grove and which was to make his success immortal.

As much as an athlete was loved and admired by his compatriots if he was the victor, so greatly was he despised and hated if he changed sides. For example, the sprinter Astylos of Croton in Lower Italy had himself proclaimed as a citizen of Syracuse in Sicily after his second victory in Olympia, because the ruler of this city had evidently encouraged him to defect for material benefits. This was probably not illegal, however the inhabitants of Croton toppled the statue they had erected on the market square after Astylos' first victory out of outrage and resentment, and transformed his house into a prison.

On the other hand, a city identified itself with its Olympic Winner and showered him in prizes, privileges and tributes. The great recognition can above all be understood when we remember that the Greeks only distinguished the victors of a contest

and knew no other placings. Defeat began with 2nd place – an interpretation that we bemoan today. At the modern *Olympic Games*, some 1,000 medals are awarded in more than 300 events, so that some 10% of all Olympic participants can at least enjoy the feeling of having been successful, while during the Classical Age only 10 wreaths were awarded in total in athletics. This meant that most Greek cities were unable to display any Olympic champions at all for decades or even centuries.

### 5. The Classical Athlete was a Specialist

One of the characteristic features of the Classical athlete is cited in traditional sport historiography as versatility, which found its obvious expression in the ancient pentathlon event. In this context, the philosopher Aristotle, who called the pentathletes the “most beautiful” athletes on account of their balanced qualities, is frequently quoted as a main authority.

However, the reality of athletics in the Classical Age is quite a different matter. The Greeks were soon to experience that the requirement of the noble ethos of “always being the best, superior to the others”, the absolute priority of performance and victory, a concentration of one’s powers on *one* thing, made specialisation necessary. This development can already be detected in the Archaic Epoch. At the *Olympic Games*, the specialists in the combat sports of wrestling, boxing, and the pancratium were at the centre of public interest. Around these, legends and anecdotes would grow. By way of contrast, the outward appearance of the *pentathlon* was less attractive on account of the breaks between the individual disciplines, the confusion over the state of the competition and the complicated method of determining the winner. In fact, from the introduction of this discipline in Olympia in 708 BC until the end of the Classical Age we only know a handful of pentathletes by name. Furthermore, there is reason to believe that usually only very few contestants qualified to enter this event at the great *Panhellenic Games*.

Although they included members of distinguished families whose victories were celebrated in a manner befitting their station by poets such as Pindar and Bacchylides, no explicit reference can be found for the *pentathlon* being par-

ticularly popular among the spectators nor in the general public's opinion on account of its requirement for versatility in contrast to the specialist disciplines. The popularity and esteem of the *pentathlon* is also revealed by ancient lists of prizes, even though these mainly originate from the post-Classical Age: whereas, at the *Panathenaic Games* in the fourth century BC, victors in this discipline would still win the same number of amphoras of oil as wrestlers and boxers, the first-placed in a competition in the third century AD, in Aphrodisias in Asia Minor, won an even lesser prize than the winner of the boys stade race, and was thus ranked last.

However, there is a much more significant indicator for an appropriate assessment of the role of the *pentathlon* in the Classical Age. Although there were competitions in running, wrestling and boxing for boys (up to the age of 20) in Olympia, the pentathlon was – with the exception of 628 BC – not held in this age-group. If the idea of versatility in ancient gymnastics and athletics had really been of such central significance, then the *pentathlon* would not only have been reserved for men.

The “perfect” statues of the fifth century which were erected in the sacred precincts and in the squares of the Greek cities do not mirror reality, but rather ideal types who were often identifiable only by an inscription on the base. When in the fourth century BC realistic representation and the art of portrait came into being, we also find athletes of another kind; giant colossuses with unbalanced proportions, smashed noses and mutilated ears.

Allow me at the end to draw one more important conclusion. As much as an athlete in Classical Antiquity also experienced admiration among spectators and fellow citizens, he was nevertheless a mere human, who had his limits and who, too, was not devoid of weaknesses, temptations and unsporting behaviour. This is shown by the statues of Zeus (Zanes), which were financed from fines imposed on those who had contravened the Olympic principles and rules.

The classical athlete is there twice: Once in the victory songs of the poets and the idealised statues or the romanticised conceptions of the 19th century, and, secondly, in the reality, that historians and archaeologists, equipped with 100 years of experience in Olympic competitive sport, have regained and recovered.

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## YOUTH OLYMPIC GAMES 2010: WHAT DOES THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT EXPECT FROM THESE GAMES?



**Isidoros KOUVELOU (GRE)**

*President of the International Olympic Academy*

Dear friends,

Ancient Olympia attracts new visitors from all over the world who thus have the opportunity not only to learn about Olympic history but also to live it in the country, which is the oldest school of the Olympic spirit. Here, at the IOA, we are at the service of the Olympic Movement, arousing young people's imagination about the Olympic ideals. At the same time, however, we are also looking for truth, new trends and new challenges and exploring the causes of the behavior patterns we are presently witnessing within the Olympic Movement.

The first Olympic Games that were staged in Olympia in 776 B.C. lasted only four days. They were held in honor of Zeus. Since then, the games were held every four years and the interim period between two games was known as the "Olympiad".

When the time for celebrating the games was nearing, the "spondophoroi" (libation bearers), holding olive branches, were bringing the message of the Olympic truce to the whole of the Greek world (the sacred truce originally lasted one month, but was extended to three months later on); this meant that hostilities stopped, prisoners of war and other prisoners could no longer be put to death. It is worth noting that during the 1,200 years of the games' celebration, there were very few and insignificant violations of the truce. This shows that the Olympic Games and their philosophy were a strong institution, respected by all.

The Hellanodikai (the Olympic judges) were responsible for the games' organisation and supervision. Originally, this was a hereditary and life function; later on, however, they were chosen by drawing of lots among all citizens. Greeks who had committed no crime or sacrilege were allowed to participate in the Games. Barbarians and slaves, on the other hand, could not take part. In Antiquity, athletes competed simply for honor since the only prize was a wreath of wild olive branches from the sacred tree in Olympia. The moral significance of victory was, however, incommensurate. The Olympic victor was showered with honors when he returned to the city. They would demolish a portion of the city's walls, since the city that had given birth to an Olympic victor no longer needed them, to allow the winner to enter the city through this new gate. In other cities, they would inscribe their names on steles, sculptors would create their busts and they were worshipped as heroes after their death. The most important honor for an Olympic victor though, was the right to erect his statue in the sacred Altis.

Despite this, as it evolved the institution could not avoid mistakes, material pursuits, or the propensity to political and commercial exploitation, the same phenomena that together with gigantism we see repeated today with mathematical precision.

The institution of the Olympic Games shaped the Greeks' national, racial and cultural unity, combining to a maximum degree the cultivation of the body, the mind and the soul, whilst contributing to the enhancing of customs, traditions, culture and ideals.

We owe the re-establishment, in fact, the revival of the Olympic Games' international version, to the many efforts of Pierre de Coubertin, working together with the Greek scholar Demetrius Vikelas, who would become the first President of the International Olympic Committee.

Coubertin announced his idea in 1892 and tried to find supporters. Two years later, in 1894, during the international athletic congress at the Sorbonne, a date that marks the creation of the IOC, he managed to include on the agenda the revival of the Olympic Games.

It was finally decided that the games would be revived and held every four years, each time in a different country. Thus, the first Olympic Games of the mod-

ern era were held with great pomp in Athens, the birthplace of the Olympic spirit and ideals, in the marble Panathinaikon stadium. Since then, the games have been traveling all over the world, bringing all the human and timeless values of Olympism to all the peoples and civilizations in the world.

Today, the very concept of sports is fully associated with the institution of the Olympic Games. It is, however, more than true that these same Games, for decades now, have started to become an instrument for promoting various personal, social and political objectives, often disregarding the central figure of the institution, the human athlete, who is easily carried away by commercial exploitation that brings material benefits that clean sport does not promise.

We all know that sport cannot exist without sportsmanship. It is, however, true that corruption, the plague of our modern societies, has began to invade the field of sport, the worst being that soon none of us will be in the least surprised. Each day fanatical supporters grow in numbers, while sports lovers are becoming fewer. Sports venues instead of being places of joy, friendship and celebration are turning into places of conflict and strife. Children are exposed to scenes that distort the “sporting spirit” and we are all faced with the important question of whether, under such conditions, sport can really meet its deeper social objectives.

Each year, very many conferences are held, books are being written, codes of conduct and declarations published by international organisations, sports federations and governmental agencies, dealing with the issue. But are these efforts enough? Our times require a more practical, specific and effective intervention. Protecting barriers and security forces in sports venues do not seem to be enough; they foment, on the contrary, what we are desperately trying to avoid: rivalry. Our efforts should be aimed at the roots of the problem, focusing on preventing rather than simply trying to suppress the negative phenomena that affect sports. Prevention in this case means to cultivate and promote the concept of “sportsmanship” and internationally recognized fundamental values, through a systematic and consolidated approach.

Without any doubt, this approach and communication should begin with the children and young people, not only because they are more open to stimuli, but because they represent the world’s future. Promoting fair play, on a broader scale,

could be a major contribution to the developing societies of the 21st century and allow us all to learn to live in peace. This conviction is shared by many leading figures of the modern Olympic Movement, who believe that the ideology of fair play can create the virtuous citizen that mankind is desperately seeking.

“Fair play” moves beyond competition; it is expressed through mutual respect and communication, mutual understanding and cooperation among individuals and groups. If we teach these social values to the new generation we shall build a better and fairer world. Fair play can contribute, significantly, to the promotion of brotherhood among people and understanding of multicultural differences, doing away with xenophobia, racism, violence, social and racial discrimination.

In this context, National Olympic Academies can play a pivotal social role, helping youth to build their character fully aware of the importance of communication and cooperation. This can only be achieved if, in parallel with the athletes’ athletic preparation, special importance is given to the teaching and application of the principles of fair play, opportunities and incentives are provided to young people, allowing them to develop a critical attitude about what is right or wrong, fair or unfair. The desirable result will emerge gradually when the new generation of athletes and sports fans, having been brought up with the principles of fair play, will be ready to demonstrate a sense of responsibility and integrity of behavior. This is the generation that shall guide sport and society towards a better future.

Just as intolerance is born from ignorance and misconception, tolerance is the outcome of knowledge and understanding. This means that young people should be the starting point of all our activities: in the class room, during games, in the clubs and at home.

“Fair play” is a positive idea. It encapsulates the notions of friendship, dignity, respect for others, good behavior and equal opportunities. According to the Council of Europe, Fair Play is defined as a state of mind and not only as a way of behaving. It covers issues like eliminating cheating during the competition, doping for enhancing performance, violence (both physical and verbal), corruption and excessive commercialization. The game should be played for the sake of the game and not for any other purpose. Sports competitions should be seen as a celebra-

tion, an opportunity for people to come together and as the objective of a journey whose destination is self-knowledge and a positive contribution to the community. In top performance sport, problems are more numerous and we see there the following contradiction: on the one hand, we want the game to be played for the game's sake, while on the other we strive to make the game the pursuit of victory by any means and the breaking of records.

We want on the one hand, to preserve and disseminate the principles of "fair play" that will establish each country's reputation worldwide in the minds of sports lovers, while trying, on the other, to train athletes for the production of records and each country's promotion. There are many who believe that we should provide, right away, the proper education and preparation to ensure that the presence of athletes and fans and their reactions will remain within the boundaries of sportsmanship.

All people involved in sports (officials, coaches, referees, athletes, managers, administrators, sponsors, journalists, sports physicians, spectators) are equally responsible for the future of top performance sport and the development of sports in general. The goal of us all should be to encourage young people not only to become actively involved in sport but also to play by the rules and apply "fair play" in practice, as an integral and not optional element of any athletic activity, sports policy and administration, at all levels of skill and commitment, including recreational and competitive sports.

We recognize, therefore, that participation and involvement in sports for children and youth should be integrated in a broader social environment. We also recognize that the possible benefits that society and the individual can derive from sports will increase only if "fair play" is placed at the center of athletic competition. We finally recognize that greater priority should be given to "fair play" by all those who, directly or indirectly, influence and encourage sports activities for children and young people. They are:

- At political level, the governments themselves
- At sports level, sports organisations, clubs and international Olympic education institutions.
- At social level, finally, parents, teachers, coaches, officials, journalists, doctors.

We all have a share of responsibility whatever the position from which we serve sport. Specifically:

To encourage the adoption of high ethical models in all the areas of society within which sports operate.

To motivate and support organisations and individuals who behave with integrity in sport.

To obtain for young children that the promotion of sports and fair play is included as a core objective of the general education program.

To ensure that political bodies in all countries will encourage research, both at national and international levels, on issues related to “fair play”.

In my opinion, sports federations and associations bear a major part of responsibility with respect to this question.

Those who hold the fate of their member-athletes in their hands should pay special attention to what they expect from young people who practice sport. Competition and the pursuit of victory are part of any young person’s normal mental attitude. Those who manage the relevant bodies, however, should have a clear mind and ask their athletes to achieve the maximum without resorting to paramedical performance enhancing. The question that arises is how ready officials are to inculcate in young people the values mentioned above? How much can they resist the temptation of not focusing on medals and distinctions with any material reward they might entail?

Can we be sure that all those who are responsible for children and youth have the necessary qualifications that will allow them to guide, educate, cultivate and train them, while taking into account the biological and psychological changes associated with children growing up?

Apart from the leadership of sports organisations, however, the parents of young athletes are naturally the most important people for socializing youth through sports.

Unfortunately, research has shown that quite often it is the parents themselves who have pushed their children to non-sporting behavior.

Many parents behaved improperly during sports competitions, verbally abus-

ing referees, the athletes of the rival team and even the teams' coaches. The parents' attitude, the way they see sports and present it to their children will have a major impact on their children's future sports orientation.

How can we convey Olympic philosophy to the parents? Are we capable of clearing the ground for this category of actors? And if the answer is yes, by means of which educational activity should we do it? These are all present-day questions with much more difficult answers!

As many of us in this room know very well, centuries have gone by since the time when the prize for Olympic victors was an olive branch and the games' aim the noble emulation of physical abilities, as well as the global teaching of competition rules.

Today, unfortunately, the Olympic ideal and top performance sports tend to lose their value. Virtue is dressed in dollars, euros and pounds.

Then, the objective of athletic contests was to promote sincere cooperation among people, consolidation of peace and fair competition among athletes. Physical skills were closely associated with intellectual, artistic and recreational achievement.

In recent years, a dangerous industry that produces future champions, as well as students, has been set up in all countries; it is tolerated and often supported not only by the children, their parents and coaches but by the state as well. Olympic medalists, champions and athletes have tested positive for banned doping substances, which often cause irreparable damage to the human body and sometimes even death. For my country, I would like to report the characteristic (frightening) doping cases of a 17-year old athlete and a 16-year old girl swimmer.

I wonder how many more student-athletes around the world, under the pressure of their desire to stand out and become champions, resort to the use of...innocent vitamins?

How many more student-athletes under the pressure of their coaches and their parents as well resort to the use of "innocent" anabolic steroids, in order to place first in their sport?

How many others exploit the "loopholes" in the relevant legislation, which gives them the right to obtain bonuses or be admitted, without passing exams, to

higher educational institutions if they become champions, Balkan Games winners or Olympic medallists?

We are not referring of course to those children who are true athletes in the real Olympic sense of the term, who are fighting for the “olive branch”, without setting necessarily as their target their admission to university without exams. We are talking about the children who are “doped” by professional distinctions, about coaches who, in search of distinction and profits, push their athletes into the world of illegal and dangerous substances, about parents who turn a blind eye and even tolerate the so-called “innocent” anabolic steroids. We are referring to any government, which instead of distributing money to champions and Olympic medallists and even a University seat, should “dope” today’s youth with values and ideals.

You might of course say to me, in antiquity they would bring down walls to allow Olympic victors to enter the city, so why are we annoyed today by the privileges that champion athletes enjoy?

Quite right, we too are not in favour of abolishing privileges and offers. Champion athletes should be rewarded, especially since this is what is effectively happening at world level, now that sport has turned professional, but not on such a huge scale.

Deeply concerned and worried I wonder daily what will be the athlete’s model that the Youth Olympic Games (14-18 years) will give us in 2010. Will these be games seeking to promote education and sports culture, or games striving for medals and privileges at any price? Have participants followed Olympic education courses in their countries? As announced, the educational programme will only be implemented only during the period of the games and we may well wonder what will be the attendance rate? Wouldn’t the term “festival” instead of “Games” be more appropriate, saving the youth from the parameters a high level competition way bring along? Is doping control an appropriate measure for the psychology of children who are 14-15 years old? Are we perhaps creating a new form of sports trade through the children? It is absolutely certain that according to the IOC planning the Youth Olympic Games are not considered becoming a replica of the modern Olympic Games. But is this going to be kept away? At the end of the

Games, are we having a number of premature young super athletes or maybe, and I do hope so, a new athlete model that will respond with a healthy attitude and reaction to today's challenges? We have heard that it has been decided not to establish any records in any sport. This is a decision moving in the right direction, fully in line with what I have been detailing above. But should it also be appropriate not to announce the athletes' performance as recommended in this hall by the representatives of some National Olympic Academies? It should not escape our attention that any publicized distinction plays into the hands of those who want to benefit from transient fame, pushing the recognized athlete to seek easy distinction and material rewards.

I would be extremely interested to hear your personal views on my proposal to launch a special information campaign aimed at prospective participants in the Youth Olympic Games on the effects of doping on very young children, in particular, and entrust this role to the NOCs and the NOAs in all countries. Doping must be eradicated before it hurts our young, innocent friends. We should have zero tolerance for those who prepare to play with the health of our children. The IOA must mobilize the NOAs in all countries - as all countries will be taking part in the first Youth Olympic Games in 2010 with at least one athlete - to play an active role and contribute to the teaching of Olympic education so that the Youth Olympic Games have as their sole purpose and goal the revival of the noble ideal of sportsmanship and fair play.

It is up to us to bring back the sporting and Olympic ideal, the ideal that reflected fair play and the prevalence of virtue over money!

Medals are not everything as Pierre de Coubertin used to say, it is participation that is important.

I believe that in this way we shall revive the Olympic Movement. I believe that in this way we shall create a model athlete who is the true ambassador of the Olympic values.

**CULTURE, EDUCATION AND SPORT:  
IDEALISM AND REALITY AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES**



**Sophia BEKATOROU (GRE)**

*Olympic Medallist*

*Women's 470 class, Yangling – Keelboat Women,  
Sailing, Gold Athens 2004, Bronze Beijing 2008*

Dear Olympic Medallists,

I am very moved for this opportunity to be among Olympic Medallists from all over the world. I recognize your combating spirit, your quality and great commitment to the sporting ideal but, above all, I recognize the flame that burns in you for the future of the major institution of the Olympic Games.

In this context, let us exchange views, let us build on our most positive experiences and reflect on the ways in which we can propagate to a broader audience in each country the Olympic Ideal, an ideal that runs the risk of being lost as the interest for lofty values like fair play, chivalry, unity, is dwindling.

This is a reality that we all recognize: the commercialization of the Olympic Games and the many doping cases that tarnish the image of world sport.

Today is also an excellent opportunity to identify and propose ways for using constructively the specialized knowledge that we have acquired from sport, which could be enhanced by our societies in order to promote the sporting ideal in education, culture and, more generally, in individual communities.

We, the Olympic medallists who had the honor of bringing glory to our countries and find ourselves at the center of the world's interest can now, through our future

activities and work at a professional and social level, hand down the values that not only promote modern civilization but give us hope for a more humane future.

Let us reflect for a moment on how the ancient Greeks conceived culture, education and sport.

The place where we are gathered, whose ancient name was the Altis, was chosen by the Greeks in Antiquity because of its idyllic setting and was a source of inspiration and creative endeavor in the field of philosophy and art i.e. civilization (Cleanthis Paleologos, *Olympia and the Olympic Games in Antiquity*, 25). In Olympia, a neutral, pacific, religious center, Hellenism attained maturity, became aware of its Hellenism and tried different forms of universal cooperation and unity, which it applied at religious, political, artistic, social, cultural and sporting levels.

The home of Hellenic civilization became the home of the whole world; every four years, large crowds would gather from practically all parts of the world in order to attend the Olympic Games. The Olympic Games were not just a sports event; their celebration marked the beginning of the truce among the city-states and was an opportunity for them to conclude agreements. Olympia had become a pan-Hellenic center that reflected the people's opinion and will. During the Games, many artists would come to Olympia to present their work, poets to recite their poems, orators and philosophers to engage in oratory sparring (Cleanthis Paleologos, *Olympia and the Olympic Games in Antiquity*, 85). Olympia was the heart of Greece and the Olympic Games was its pulse that was beating every four years.

The events staged during the Olympic Games were not warlike; victory was not an end in itself since the purpose of the competitions was to provide entertainment. Our ancestors had quickly realized that young people who practiced sports became better, as they improved their physical as well as their mental abilities and used the events and the games in order to offer better and more comprehensive education to their children. The ancient Greeks put to practice the maxim “a healthy mind in a healthy body” or at least tried to achieve an equilibrium between the mind and the body. Many of the events were games, which attracted the public's interest and gave young people an opportunity to show off their physical, intellectual and mental powers (Cleanthis Paleologos, *Olympia and the Olympic*

*Games in Antiquity*, 113). We can see, therefore, that physical exercise together with music was part of young people's education as Plato informs us (Plato, *Hippias Minor*, 363). They also attached particular importance to gymnastics, an activity that young people practiced since early childhood and not just as an occasional recreational activity. The savagery and harshness that some people have attributed to the Olympic ideal was not called for and the public did not like to watch the winners of the contest if they were violent people full of hatred. Athletes did not have to live with the pressure and stress of today's records, nor were they highly paid professionals.

It was not a coincidence that Pericles in his *Funeral Oration* praised the Athenian's reflection and moderation as against the Spartans' excesses. (Thucydides, *History*, B, 39).

I have referred in detail to the Olympic games of the archaic period, because that was when the seeds of idealism were sown, although our ancestors were never able to reach perfection as they had envisioned (Andre Bernand, *The road to Olympia, The spirit of the Olympic Games*, 82).

Many centuries have gone by since then and with time things should normally have evolved. Today, although we are witnessing technological and commercial development, we also see that intellectual pursuits and values instead of expanding are stagnating or even diminishing. At the Olympic Games today it is the multinational companies who have the leading role since they support and finance the grandiose staging of the Games while demanding at the same time media coverage and promotion often to the detriment of their quality.

The athletes' parade during the opening ceremony of the Games used to recognize the significance of the honor and effort, whilst today it is just a parade in which the athletes, who should normally be the protagonists, are just a piece of television time. Moreover, there are very few countries that have been able to build on the huge infrastructure and technological legacy at the end of the Olympics, for cultural and educational purposes while, on the other hand, many others saw their public assets being destroyed because they were unable to maintain them.

So, do the Olympic Games make a contribution, at the level of culture, educa-

tion and sport or are they just an object of promotion and exploitation by multinational interests? A simple affirmative response would not resolve the problem.

We all have a share of responsibility for the present situation, for the alienation of an institution that was established centuries ago with the most promising expectations. More specifically, the responsibility belongs both to the officials who make decisions and direct the Olympic Movement and the athletes. If “certain companies who get rich”, found the athletes’ door closed, we would have fewer “child prodigies”, fewer occasional shooting star athletes but could thus still enjoy more humane Olympic Games. The Games figures would probably not be so attractive for the media because we would not be standing in awe before the countless records and could thus highlight the significance of an athlete’s effort who managed simply to compete in the Games and surpass himself and his potential and promote the image of an athlete who is also a family man with ethics and values and his contribution to young people. These are cases that rarely see the light of publicity today because they simply do not “sell” to the press and television. These are, however, things that can enhance any country’s cultural level, strengthen educational systems and, more important, give hope to youth that there is still meritocracy and a future both for sport and their life.

Are we not all partly responsible for the way things have evolved? I certainly believe so. It is imperative that we change attitude and approach. In the course of my sports career in the last 23 years, in particular during the 13 years of top performance sport, I was able to realize that any change that starts from our own self can bring major benefits as it is both lasting and has a ripple effect. It can involve our fellow human beings, lead them to reflect and help them see their own personal mistakes. Any change that we want to see in this world should first be adopted by us. As athletes we should stop to be or declare to be victims of exploitation and sacrifice any moral value on the altar of success. In this way, we can hope to have in future a healthy sport that we can happily propose to our children without any qualms. As Isocrates said: “Take thought for everything which concerns your life, but especially cultivate your own reasoning power, for a sound mind in a man’s body is the greatest thing in the smallest compass. Try to be in your body a lover

of toil, and in your soul a lover of wisdom, that with the one you may be able to execute your resolves, and with the other may know how to foresee what is expedient” (Isocrates, To *Demonicus* 12,40).

Dear Olympic Medallists, it is not my intention to attribute responsibilities but rather to make you think so that we can start moving in the right direction. In the sports field there are many people who simply want to enjoy the privileges associated with an Olympic victory. I am convinced, however, that most of us on our way to Olympic victory have worked hard on ourselves and our intellectual capacities in order to improve our performances. We engaged in serious self-criticism, we achieved strong self-control, we denied ourselves many “pleasures” in order to be able to perform during the demanding daily training. We have realized that our conscience is our most severe critic. We have learned that balance is what will help us in the end to remain at the top and that this may be the most difficult thing to achieve when one has been so deeply involved for so long in one specific area. Plato said “... And as there are two principles of human nature, one the spirited and the other the philosophical, some God, as I should say, has given mankind two arts answering to them (and only indirectly to the soul and body), in order that these two principles (like the strings of an instrument) may be relaxed or drawn tighter until they are duly harmonised” (Plato, *Republic*, 403). Music, reading and gymnastics are among the closest friends of a top athlete on his lonely path. So I appeal to you who are listening to these words as you start on your journey to Ithaca, who feel familiar with the process I have just described and are still moved when you hear your national anthem, who feel proud of your sense of justice and noble motivation, to continue striving with the same passion throughout your life from whatever position you may choose.

We should, however, always have Ithaca in our mind. Arriving there is what we are destined for. But let us not in the least hurry the journey. Rich with all we have gained on the way, not expecting Ithaca to give us wealth. Ithaca has given and shall give us a splendid journey. Without her we would not have set out, we would have missed the opportunity to contribute (Cavafy, *Ithaca*). Without her we would not care about tomorrow, about the future of education, about culture in

the world. In this way we shall deserve “honor” like those who in the life they lead define and guard a Thermopylae. Never betraying what is right, consistent and just in all they do, always speaking the truth, yet without hating those who lie.” (Cavafy, *Thermopylae*, 222).

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## THE OLYMPIC MEDALLISTS AS ROLE MODELS: THEIR EDUCATIONAL ROLE



**Guin BATTEN (GBR)**

*Olympic silver medallist & role model  
Women's Quadruple sculls, Rowing 2000*

### Introduction

Ask yourself “What is a role model?” “Who were your childhood role models?”  
“What was it that made them role models to you?”

Searching the internet and reading the numerous debates on the rights and wrongs of Olympic role models I found an observation that appealed most to my understanding of what an Olympic role model stands for -

*“The Olympics elicit many things: selflessness, hard work, dedication, overcoming adversity, and most of all, being the embodiment of success.”*

As I grew up, at boarding school, my role models were the people around me; my sport teachers; older students at my school; my mother and father. It wasn't until, aged 12, I watched the Moscow Olympics on TV that I saw my first Olympic role models, Seb Coe and Steve Ovett (who won the 1500m and 800m gold medals) and decided that I wanted to go to the Olympic Games.

How could I be like them? How could I go to the Olympic Games? I thought I was good at the cross country running; I had never lost a race, in reality I had only ever run one race. That season I won my district championships, my county champion-

ships and was selected to run at the National Championships – I came 303rd! Aged 12 my Olympic dream was shattered but my obsession with sport had begun.

### **Power of sport**

Now, 30 years on and some 6 years since I retired from being an athlete, I have spent considerable time with other elite athletes working out how we can use the “power of sport” to work with young people to make our society a better place.

Why would I do this? I don’t really know why? Other than I know my Olympic medal should not sit in a box gathering dust at home. There is something very special about an Olympic medal, and I make it my personal mission to ensure as many young people touch and “test drive” my medal as possible. In Great Britain there are roughly 8 million children and only about 300 Olympic medallists alive. The chance of a child meeting an Olympian and touching their Olympic a medal is tiny, yet the impact is enormous. I am sure you have all witnessed the delight and excitement in their faces.

If I look at my medal it has nicks and scratches, from thousands of young people’s sticky hands. It is doing its job of sharing the “power of the Games” to young people. What does your medal look like? It disappoints me enormously when I meet an athlete with a pristine medal in mint condition.

As athletes when we go to the Olympics we become part of something amazing; something so powerful that corporations and television companies will pay millions of dollars to be associated with it; that countries use it as a sanction against their enemies (boycotts); that a nation’s sense of pride and status in the world is linked to the number of medals a handful of athletes can win. The Olympics is a phenomenon that has stretched through time itself – from ancient Greece to the global event it is today.

As role models we have an opportunity to use this power, this phenomenon for good, to help educate not only other young athletes but young people as well, about the Olympic values of Friendship, Excellence and Respect.

## Being a role model

Greg Louganis, the American diver who won numerous Olympic medals in Seoul in 1988, was leaving training one day when he saw a young 14 year old boy smoking a cigarette. He went up to the boy and asked him why he was smoking, the boy replied “because you do”. That was the day Louganis stopped smoking, and the day he realised he was a role model for life not just in sport.

We do not choose to be role models; it is something our societies place on us. It is a consequence of circumstance; but we can control what type of role models we are (good or bad) and what we do with that responsibility.

There are many ways Olympians can use their role model status to have a positive impact on others. The most elementary is as a distant hero, through television and newspapers, the most complex but rewarding is as a personal mentor or tutor through direct contact that spans a period of time.

The hero has the capacity to educate and reach a wide audience, while the personal mentor will impact a very small number, but is more likely to have a more lasting impact on behavioural change. The athlete hero is more of a general motivator while the athlete mentor can have a more targeted impact.

I have witnessed many athlete role model programmes and have spoken to hundreds of athletes trying to give back and found that there are 4 basic principles critical to creating success in the educational use of athlete role models.

### 1. Take your audience into your world

However you do it, you must take the young people into your personal world, the world of an Olympic athlete, the highs and lows, the excitement and the boredom, the glory and the pain. They need to be allowed to place you on a pedestal, to see you as a sporting god, but at the same time feel that you are opening up your heart and letting them in. Do not be afraid to cry, to be caught for words – I have witnessed many an athlete struggle with his or her tears.

With the athletes I have trained as mentors, I advise all to show footage of them competing ideally set to music. They must have their medals and the equipment

of their sport, but above all they need to be able to tell a compelling story, an emotional story of how they grew into being an Olympian.

## **2. Allow your audience to relate to and identify with who you are**

It is well known that the more a young person can relate their personal experiences with the athlete role model in front of them, the greater they are to empathise with and be affected by the educational message the athlete gives.

In the UK we hand pick the athlete role models to suit the type of young people we are working with, so much so that the athlete role model's background is more important than how good they are at public speaking. When working with disaffected young pupils, athletes who have come from broken homes, that had learning difficulties, that had struggles with obesity, shyness or heightened levels of aggression – make the most amazing connections with disaffected young people. The right sort of athlete role models can have a very positive impact on improving behaviour and attendance in British schools. [see Living for Sport programme].

## **3. Add value to an existing programme/structure of support and make repeat visits**

If you are looking to really make an impact on young people's lives - don't work in isolation. So many companies in Great Britain "tick the box" of taking athlete role models to visit young people, it looks good on television and reads well in the paper. The company gets the media coverage and the association with the Olympic athlete, but the young people get very little other than a one-off, feel good, motivational experience that has a very marginal educational impact on their lives.

Let me explain it in a sporting context; an isolated one off motivational visit: it would be like yourself, aged 12, meeting a Greg Louganis, it would be amazing and I guess you would talk about it for a week or at most a month. Whereas a supported repeat visit would be like your sports coach asking an athlete from your sport to come and talk to you before training and perhaps do some training with you, the athlete might then set some challenges, which you work on with your coach. Some weeks later the athlete comes back and sees your progress and

rewards members of your sports club with a prize for the most improved. To me that has a lasting impact.

So if you want to have a lasting educational impact seek out successful support programmes that operate around young people, so your visits can “add-value”. The athlete role model visits impact most on the first 3 stages of behavioural change and the supporting programme continues the impact on the remaining 2.

A classic example of this in Great Britain is a 4 day educational sports camp called the National Talent Orientation Camp, where the best athletes aged between 14-18 come together to learn about “what it takes to become the best”. Olympic and Special Olympic medallists work as athlete tutors delivering all the workshops content and are supported by coaches from the national sport programmes, so that the messages continue long after the Camp has finished. Our unpublished research suggests that the impact and learning actually increases 3 months after the camp has ended.

#### **4. Make sure your message is clear and targeted**

So many athletes just stand up and talk about what it feels like to go to the Olympics; they seem to forget that for most young people they will never achieve it. In essence many athlete role models alienate the young people they are talking to by not targeting their story.

Once you understand **who** you are talking to and **what** you want to achieve you will be able to know **how** you want to deliver the educational message.

Almost all the stories an athlete role model has are transferable into life, but it is the way you adapt and bridge them into the young person’s world that allows them to see the connection and learn.

In 2004 in the Covent Garden offices of Adidas I hosted my last ever meeting as chair of the British Athlete Commission. There were 20 or so athletes who were weeks away from going to Athens, over lunch we agreed what the key attributes to success in sport were. These “6 keys to success” have been one of the most useful tools for athlete role models in Great Britain for transferring their sporting stories into life messages for young people.

The “6 keys to success” are just a tool on which to structure an athlete story and experience; it allows the athlete mentor to remain an expert on their own life and at the same time draw parallels into the young peoples’ lives they are working with.

Take “hunger to achieve” - without an insatiable desire to be the best, an athlete is unlikely to be able to push themselves through hard training or get up early on dark winter mornings.

It is the same for a young person, when they want something enough they will work hard for it, if they don’t want it they won’t try. I often ask the groups I am with, “How long would you be prepared to stand in line for a litre of milk?” the typical answer is “5 minutes”, in some of the rougher areas of Britain they reply “I’d steal it!”

Then I ask the question “How long would you stand in line to get 4 free tickets for you to go and see your favourite band?” “Forever” “All day” they say.

Lack of aspiration is a real issue amongst the more deprived areas of Great Britain and has a negative impact on their chance of success at school.

## Summary

So in summary ask yourself four basic questions:

1. Am I allowing the young people into my personal Olympic world?
2. Am I giving the young people stories that will allow them to relate themselves to me?
3. Will my impact be long term and am I adding value to an existing support programme?
4. Is my message clear, targeted and transferable into their world enough for them to learn from it?

## Examples

In Great Britain we use athlete role models with young people all the time: the spectrum spans from:

- Schools using one-off motivational visits to give out sports awards or to speak at assemblies: these are supported by two national programmes Sporting Champions and athletesDIRECT (an athlete school web based introduction service).
- To athletes doing repeat behavioural change visits working directly with small groups of disaffected young people who have been excluded or on the verge of being excluded from school. Living for Sport and the Respect Athlete Mentor Programme (RAMP) are nationally funded.

Within sport there is a wide range of athlete mentoring programmes mainly run by schools and national governing bodies of sport.

For the last 3 years the British Government has been running an exciting programme call Young Ambassadors, which uses Olympic and Special Olympic role models to train young school based sporting role models (14-18 years old) to spread the Olympic values amongst their peers and to encourage more young people to take up sport. Today we have 8 of these amazing young people in the audience. They are here to learn more about the “Power of the Games” and the Olympic values so they can return to Great Britain as Olympic Ambassadors – please take the time to talk to them about what the Olympics means to you and to the young people in your country.

I have one last message to leave you with:

As a global family of Olympic medallists we have an opportunity to impact the world’s young people, to educate them about the values of friendship, excellence and respect and to change our world for a better future.

I do believe this a responsibility and not a choice.



*From the guided visit of the Olympic Medallists to the archaeological site of Ancient Olympia.*

*Conclusions  
of the Discussion Groups*



*Discussion groups.*



## DISCUSSION GROUP 1

### **Question 1**

*What do the Olympic medallists think will be the impact of the Youth Olympic Games on the lives of young developing athletes?*

#### Pro (+)

- Young people get an impression from the Olympic Games
- They can try the spirit of Olympia
- Communication and Education for young people and countries
- There are already World Championships in all sports
- Athletes and coaches get one more competition
- The competition is not for money
- We should not always see the dark sides of the sport (doping)
- Another step of the Olympic History (men – women – youth...)
- The 1st Olympic Youth Games will be probably the best – without flag, anthem, ... - like a festival
- Good examples from different countries with young athletes competition: European Youth Olympics; Czech republic (every two years ); Brazil and Germany (school competition)

#### Contra (-)

- Sport means always to compete. There is always a winner.
- The top target for an athlete is the Olympic Games. With the Youth Games they become less special.
- Without flag, anthem,... the Olympic Games will not be real Olympics

- The Olympic Games were only for amateurs first. Now we have a lot of professionals. This development can also happen with the children.
- Young athletes with a good result or future will stop school – like the soccer players
- High psychological stress (Your country and the whole world is watching you – media)
- High pressure for the young athletes - doping
- Very early start of the sports career on a high level: young athletes get tired earlier and lose the motivation to continue – they stop at an early age.
- At the young age the kids should make sport for fun and not professional
- One more competition: risk of over-competition
- Problem: in some sports you already start very early (gymnastics) – differences must take place
- Preparation costs money. Some countries can not afford this – difference between rich and poorer countries
- Realization all four years: Some kids will be out of the sports system because they are too old for the next “Olympics”
- Journalists: positive, because they have one more competition. But they will be very critical and put the focus on the negative aspects (in some countries)

*Summary:*

The idea of the Olympic Youth Games is great but it will be very difficult to realize them with all the risks and doubts. The problem is modern society – people want to see sports on a high level and they will put the focus on the medals. It would perhaps be better to name it a festival, so negative development can perhaps be reduced.

Question: Why do we want Youth Games? The youth do not want/need them (comment from the English boy).

*Ideas for better realization:*

Ask young people what they want?

A lot of top athletes should be invited – in every delegation – they should talk about the Olympic spirit, etc...

The young athletes have to be prepared before the trip (National Olympic Academies & Olympic Education)

Each nation should invent a motto with the young participants (example: GB in Beijing)

Competition in 2-3 sports? NO! – This means more training. Only specialization brings more quality and this is what the spectators want to see. The children are forced to another sport. They do the sport they like and they are perhaps talented in only this sport. In school you get the option to try other sports but then you have to make the choice.

### **Question 2**

*What are the shared common characteristics of Olympic Role Models in the countries represented within the group?*

There are a lot of differences.

*Russia:*

In several schools there are the little Olympic Games in schools one time per year. Working together, the NOC athlete's commission as well as the department of the Olympic education have published a series of handbooks concerning Olympic education which are being distributed to schools and universities.

There are also programmes supported by the government.

Perfect when coach and role model is one person.

*Senegal:*

2 Olympians are sent every month for 2 hours in a public school to talk to the kids

Organised by the athletes commission (AC).

The athletes do not receive money for that.

The AC gets no help from the government

NOCA (all African countries) “Olympic education” – big event to do sports & learn about the Olympic movement

*Czech Republic:*

There is no programme for schools. Only in the five sports centers (200 children) and each sport on his own. The NOC has no money to do more.

Organisation is easier in a small country. In bigger countries regional programmes should be organised.

The governments, NOC and athletes commissions should do more. They have to motivate the athletes and to explain why it is important. When the athletes have finished their career they have more time to be a role model and feel more responsibility. Not every athlete wants or can be a role model. Some athletes do not have the education for that (professionals). Also the bad experiences should be shared with the children. Money can always help to motivate the former athletes to become a role model.

### **Question 3**

*Drawing on examples from around the world, explore how retired athletes have been supported in their second careers. How have athletes used their fame and sporting skills to find fulfilling second careers?*

Some different examples:

*Russia:*

Owner of a synchronized swimming school (2 centers, 6 coaches, 160 children)

Build up with support of the government because she has not only a commercial line for everybody. She is also the regional centre for high level (sports line).

Her work for the athlete commission helps a lot because she knows politics, etc...

Every medallist gets money from the country (100,000 EUR + monthly amount of 500 EUR)

Every top athlete can study for free after the career.

*Iran:*

All medallists get 2000 EUR per month for the rest of their life. No need to work any more.

On top: Manager of two Clubs of the taekwondo-Liga (studied at the university).

Famous person: a region, a street, etc ... is named after him.

IOC supporting programme: young athletes get the possibility to go to school and have every day two hours of training.

*Senegal:*

Father was always telling him that he has to go to school besides the sport (studied in Paris).

After his career he was a coach in Saudi Arabia and now he is a director of a regional development centre in Dakar as well as a coach of the IAAF.

He got nothing from the government, the federation or the NOC.

There are a lot of athletes who fail after their sports career.

*Greece:*

Shooting sport and studies could be done at the same time. No problems after the sports career.

When you are under the first eight at the Olympic Games you can be an officer in the army.

There is no other programme/support.

*Brazil:*

The beginning of a supporting system for top athletes – a sort of academy (possibility to study, learn languages, what to make with money and personality after the success – not to fail). Also little support with money.

*Czech Republic:*

Besides the military system there is no programme for a second career.

At this moment the government changes every 2-3 years. So there is no development.

*Germany:*

A lot of sportsmen/sportswomen are in the military (government). After the sport they can stay in this system (Bundeswehr, Bundespolizei, Zoll).

Try to help students (no money for studies, possibility to take exams at another time, etc...).

At the moment there are a lot of discussions (between the athletes, sport federation, government, sports foundation) about the situation for the athletes after studies. How can we help them to get a job after their career? They are on the same job market as those who studied in less time and with much more experience during the studies. We have a responsibility because they offered so much time and energy into the sport.

And some other small programmes.

## DISCUSSION GROUP 2

### *Question 1*

*What do the Olympic medallists think will be the impact of the Youth Olympic Games on the lives of young developing athletes?*

- It will put more pressure on young athletes to prioritize sport and perform at a younger age than already, rather than ensure a rounded life and their education.
- Wanting to educate the participants will create more time pressure on the young people.
- Encouraging such a high level of performance so young will lead to injuries.
- Such focus will cause further difficulties after their sporting careers. It is hard enough to deal with life after the Olympics as an adult, so how would a young athlete cope with this?
- It will take away from the status of the Olympic Games as the absolute pinnacle and being so special. All things should be a stepping stone to the Olympics.
- There will be too much focus on victory at a young age. This will lead to psychological problems and saturation. It will not encourage longevity in sport.
- Young athletes will be sent to win medals, not to be educated.
- Young athletes will be expected to be role models at a very young age, but this will be too young an age for some of them to assume this role.

- It will encourage the commercial incentives of Olympic participation at an even younger age.
- It will promote even further the commercial aspect of the Olympic symbol as a whole.
- The young athletes will have even less control over their childhood. The decision whether they will compete is more likely to be taken by the coach, federation or parents, than the children themselves.
- Some countries may develop athletes solely to become Youth Olympic Games winners, not even wanting or expecting them to carry on afterwards.
- It will create a conflict of interests. Some athletes will already have medals, and the potential to win medals, at the main Olympic Games.

*Positives*

- Parents and coaches could be educated around the Olympic spirit sooner than otherwise.

*Possible solutions:*

- Winners should not be called 'Olympic Champions'.
- Relevant to doing various events: athletes at that age are already specializing, so it would add more challenges than it would solve. Could there be fewer events, 1 or 2 for each of long distance, sprint, throwing and jumping?
- Bring winners, or even all participants, to Olympia to experience it, either before or after.
- Games should be called a 'Festival', not an 'Olympics'.
- Have an Olympic festival without competition.
- Could the Youth Olympic Games be an incentive to disadvantaged children, rather than already elite athletes?

## Question 2

*What are the shared common characteristics of Olympic Role Models in the countries represented in the group?*

This depended greatly on where the athlete is from.

Ended up answering:

How do Olympic medallists use their position as a role model to help educate young athletes about the concepts of the Olympic spirit?

- The athlete tells their story, emphasizing the Olympic spirit with examples from their experience
- However they must also think about what their *message* is – what sport has taught them outside of the arena.
- Use the opportunity to
  - Introduce children to the sporting world and get them away from the computer.
  - Paint a positive picture of the world of sport and its benefits
  - Tell what it feels like to be a *part of* something so big.
  - Teach that you need inspiration for everything you do, and that it is all around you, not only on the television.
  - Talk to the parents and convey to them how important their role is.
- Teach the children on the importance and value of *having* a DREAM (sporting or not)
  - Then, *how* to go about pursuing that goal.
  - Not just about being *active*, it is about being *pro-active*
  - Emphasize that the most important thing is going after your dream; of being the best you can be in whatever you choose to focus on
  - Having no limits – doing something never done before
- Teach about perspective and balance
  - Highlight the whole person behind the Olympic medal
  - What else you have done in your life
- Convey what it takes

- o The steps
- o The time it takes
- o How many times you may need to lose in order to win
- o The complexity of the sport
- Must think about *how* to get these messages across:
  - o Always relate to examples in their own lives so that what you are saying is tangible
  - o Make the session interactive: show the medal, pictures and short videos of the performance, the flag and the national anthem to relate the story. One example was of singing the National Anthem together with the children, which brought home the message of being a part of something big
  - o Use all the questions about drugs to emphasize the principals of fair play
  - o Make a collage of all sports, not just own performance. Also of the flame being lit and the count-down to the start of the games. Use emotion and music to highlight the experience.
  - o Although the athlete may start off on a pedestal or literally a podium, to speak to people, they should emphasize that they are normal human beings by coming down to the level of the children and being amongst them. They must know that Olympic champions were children just like them – you do not have to be born special.

Things to be aware of:

- o *How* we convey these messages is the most important thing. The athlete must work out how to have the greatest impact.
- o Ensure that the children have been prepared for the session, so they can know some background of the athlete and think about anything they want to ask before it takes place
- o Some athletes are not aware that they are role models, so they need guidance in how to best fulfill this role.

### **Question 3**

*Drawing on examples from around the world, explore how retired athletes have been supported in their second careers. How have athletes used their fame and sporting skills to find fulfilling second careers?*

- We suggest that each athlete not only writes the story of how they got their medal, but also what they are doing now both as a role model and to earn a living.
- All countries are different, and there was a good example about an Athletes' Career Programme from a Swedish company which operates worldwide to help athletes prepare themselves for getting a job and placing them in companies.
- Otherwise, there was the common theme of little support for second careers.
- The most impact has come from programmes created by individuals who have used opportunities their medals have provided them to invest primarily in education and also go into politics. In each case this was to make a difference in all areas of society, not primarily sport, always using and spreading the same values and principals as they used to become an Olympic athlete.

## DISCUSSION GROUP 3

### **Question 1**

*The young athletes who will participate in the Youth Olympics will be impacted by these Games in the following ways:*

They will be placed in a stressful, competitive situation that is not compatible with an educational environment. A world level competition requires the emphasis to be on winning. They will consider educational sessions about “Fair Play”, etc, a distraction from their main goals – eating, sleeping and WINNING!

The only focus will be winning. There will be no time and no interest in “education.” A major competitive championship is the wrong environment for class room studying, reading, and intellectual activities.

Youth athletes placed in high achieving, high expectation situations at a young age frequently burn out mentally before they reach their peak physically.

The young athlete grows up too fast – they skip childhood, miss their youth – they do not experience normal development.

### **However:**

Early teenage years are a good time to introduce athletes to new information new ideas.

Experiencing multi-cultural activities, meeting exciting new people and being part of a special event such as the YOG is a positive, meaningful adventure that will be a life- long memory.

**NOTE:** To reinforce the athletes’ experience in the YOG the organizers need to;

Balance the competition with fun diversions - activities outside the athletic competitions such as art, dancing, musical shows, comics and “fun” games.

## **Question 2**

*Do Olympic Medallists have a duty to help educate young athletes?*

This group felt the word “duty” was the wrong word. Duty means “obligation” and “no choice.” This group felt clearly that Olympians were, indeed, the correct people to deliver the Olympic stories and Olympic lessons to young athletes. But, each Olympic athlete must make it their own personal choice to deliver such messages. It is wrong to make an Olympian “obligated.”

Kids only see the glamorous part of sports. They need to hear the “total” story from an Olympian who has experienced the work and sacrifices. The Olympians want to tell their stories and be accessible to young athletes BUT they cannot be expected to donate their time, to be “on call,” for the purpose of educating young athletes. It is clearly not a DUTY (written or spoken) an Olympian must expect.

It is a nice idea for Olympians to be available to help encourage and educate kids – BUT it is not PRACTICAL. Most Olympians are ready to move on with their lives after their last Games. They are pursuing jobs and new directions. They are moving into the next chapter of their life. At this point, they need to be paid for their services as you pay a skilled professional in any line of work.

**NOTE:** This group felt that people outside the Olympic movement, i.e. the general public, school administrators, and such, may feel, because Olympians represent their country and all the citizens, that, indeed, it IS the DUTY of Olympians to educate and share their experiences far and wide.

The Olympians, however, feel they are easily taken for granted. Instead, Olympians would like respect for the personal time it takes to address a group. They feel their athletic skills, experiences and achievements are appreciated and applauded. But when they speak to young athletes, they are expected to motivate, to energize, to excite, to educate, to revitalize, to inspire and to create positive thinking, to in-

still new goals, to develop new drive and new habits and to make everyone in the room want to be an Olympic Champion -- ALL FOR FREE.

### **Question 3**

*How are retired athletes supported in their second careers? Did their fame help?*

There are varied situations depending on 1) the era (year) of competition and 2) the country. Examples:

Several countries use government and/or the military as a means to sponsor athletes. This financial help ends for many once they retire and then must fend for themselves. Those left on their own most often became teachers or coaches using their sporting success to get the best jobs. Others still must finish university studies to earn teaching jobs with no help from their success in the Olympics.

Some countries provide a life- long pension to Olympic medalists. This is not enough to live on, but provides a very nice security. Most athletes in this discussion group turned to coaching or an athletic related job upon retirement.

The Netherlands has a government sponsored job placement program that assists the athlete with testing for job placement. USA Olympic TV sponsors NIKE, AT&T, Hilton Hotels, etc, provide part time jobs to athletes while in training for the Games. Upon retirement, athletes have the choice to move from part time to a full time position.

In short, there is a wide range of second career opportunities; some countries treat their athletes as heroes and reward them nicely, others are remembered for a short time after their victory but receive no special treatment, and some countries have zero follow up or interest in their winners.

**Closing Ceremony  
of the 2nd International Session  
for Olympic Medallists  
ANCIENT OLYMPIA, 18th July 2009**



*Inga Babakova (UKR) and Filbert Bayi (TAN) are receiving their participation diplomas by the IOA President Isidoros Kouvelos.*



**ADDRESS**  
**by the Director of the IOC International Cooperation**  
**and Development Department,**  
**T.A. Ganda SITHOLE (ZIM)**

Mr President, Director, Dean, Fellow participants,  
Thank you very much for the invitation and the, as the Dean says in earlier remarks, concerns that you have raised which will certainly be transmitted to the IOC and also on my part I will do the same. As a matter of fact, on Monday, we were spending the whole day talking about the contents of the educational and cultural programme of the Youth Olympic Games with UN Agencies with the YOG team in Geneva. And certainly I can see that you have spent quite a lot of your time addressing the Youth Olympic Games.

In these few words, I would like to appeal to you for one thing. There are some lines of communications that obviously we are missing. If these lines were re-found, re-established, re-used, I am sure that there would be an easy way to communicate information from up and information from below as well.

The Youth Olympic Games have been a major discussion for the past 4 years and there are one hundred and ten or one hundred and twenty thousands of you whose recognized organisation is the World Olympians Association. Certainly, it would be asking too much from the IOC to communicate individually to one hundred and twenty thousand people. That is why someone who has started organisations realizes that by putting organisations together, you can talk to one person, who will talk to the other person and so forth. And certainly there is a bit of a problem there.

There are a lot of things that need to be triggered about the Youth Olympic Games and it is obvious that some YOG concerns have not found their way or

some of these have been addressed but did not go all the way down. I will not speak for my two board members here. Especially, Mr Georgiadis can tell you that athletes have been involved thoroughly in the conception of the YOG and they are going to be the major activators of the Youth Olympic Games, so as Youth Olympic Games to be about young people being mentored by athletes like yourselves. So, you are an integral part of the Youth Olympic Games.

There are certainly concerns about the Youth Olympic Games and even though I am directly involved in the Youth Olympic Games, I can see that there are a number of things that need to be looked into and I thank you for that.

Finally, I just want to say that there have been some concerns about if athletes or medallists will be asked to give medals. Being an Olympian means assigning yourself to a lifetime service. I have known too many Olympians in my life and last Saturday I spent the whole day in Paris talking with a former Olympian of 1956, who is a very important man in the society, about what we can do for the young people. He is a former President of the World Bank, a man of means who does not need the Olympic Movement and who found 6 or 7 hours as a former Olympian to talk about the Olympics. So, you are morally obligated to contribute. That is what an Olympian is about. The people who started running here, who invented the Olympics, did not do that to run faster, to jump higher or to bring glory just to themselves. The Olympians have these moral values and you want to ensure that young people who will come after you like in the YOG, will subscribe to these. If we take that away, then we are taking a major part of Olympianism from you. My job with the two gentlemen from the IOC Commission for Culture and Olympic Education sitting next to me, is to see how to utilize your medals, your being Olympians, in order to make sure that the 3,500 young people that we are bringing to the Youth Olympic Games in Singapore can emulate. I am very glad that someone has already referred to the European festival, because it is a great example and we have had a good look of that and we have taken a lot from there as well as from your presentations. So, with the help of the two gentlemen sitting next to me, I think that we can address a lot of your concerns.

Thank you.

## ADDRESS

on behalf of the Observers of the Session from Mediterranean countries,  
by Ghada SALEH (SYR)

Mr Isidoros Kouvelos, the President of IOA,

Mr Kostas Georgiadis, the Dean of IOA,

Mr Dionyssidis Gangas, the Director of IOA,

On behalf of Syrian Olympic Committee and Syrian Olympic Academy, it is my pleasure to express my sincere gratitude to IOA for invitation and hosting NOC's participants to attend this seminar.

All thanks to the International Committee of the Mediterranean Games and its support for all Mediterranean NOCs.

I would like to seize this occasion to congratulate Mr Isidoros Kouvelos for his election as the secretary general of the international committee of the Mediterranean Games.

My best wishes to fulfill your mission and to organise a successful in "Volos 2013", 17th Mediterranean Games.

Today I am so happy my dream comes true seeing the Ancient Olympia.

The whole world should pay tribute to Baron Pierre De Coubertin for his revival the Ancient Olympic Games and perpetuate his memory all over the world.

Kindest personal regards to Dr Jacques Rogge IOC President and his messages in every event which inspire me to develop my job in the Syrian Olympic committee.

Thanks to the OS family for their providing the NOC's reports, programmes, newsletters.

All thanks to the Hellenic Olympic Committee and to Olympia Route members in HOC.

All thanks to:

My lecturers, my colleagues, everybody in the secretariat of IOA.

I share with you the experience, knowledge, joy in an Olympic Spirit.

I look forward to work together to strengthen the Olympic Movement and to develop the programmes of IOA in every academy in the NOC's.

Please allow me to thank my colleagues, the postgraduate students who encourage me to do my best.

Good luck to everyone.

Thank you for your cooperation and interest.

**ADDRESS**  
**on behalf of the Participants of the Session,**  
**by Bram LOMANS (NED)**

Dear Mr President Mr Kouvelos,  
Honorary Dean Professor Georgiadis,  
Professor Dionyssi Gangas,

On behalf of all the participants I am pleased to thank you for the invitation and possibility to stay here at this special place.

I would also like to thank Sophia, Guin and Professor Lämmer for their contribution. You gave us the information we needed to have fruitful discussion and gave us some new insides as well.

Besides the official programme we (at least I) learned a lot about the differences and similarities of how athletes are treated in their home countries. Which is an important base in how we can become the role model we would like to be in our country.

I think I can speak on behalf of most of the athletes that staying here at this magic place was of great added value to our stay. To enter the ancient stadium by walking under the arch was an unforgettable moment for me.

I sure hope that you can make it possible for as many future athletes to attend this special place. So they can have a taste of Olympia and become future ambassadors of the Olympic values.

We can only hope that some of our conclusions will be used in future discussions about the subjects we discussed these days. It will be our responsibility to address these conclusions in our own countries.

I would like to end with a special thanks to everybody who made it possible for us to have this pleasant stay as we had.

Thank you.

**ADDRESS**  
**on behalf of the Lecturers of the Session,**  
**by Sophia BEKATOROU (GRE)**

Dear Mr President, Honorary Dean and Director, Athletes and Guests,  
Dear Mr Sithole,

As speakers, we would like to make 3 basic observations from the short time we have been together at the IOA.

The integrity of sport is being questioned by the illegal actions of few. We acknowledge the need to find ways to bring the Olympic values back to the front of competing athletes' mind.

There is a real desire from the Olympic Medallists to give back to the young people in their communities; our challenge to the world Olympians, to the National Olympic Associations in our countries and to other Olympians is to join forces, to unite our efforts and to find a structure to create an Olympic voice. We must use the untapped potential of current and past Olympic role models to deliver the Olympic message.

As a Movement we need to take the best from the past and translate it into a language that young people today can make their own; we need to find hundreds more young Olympic ambassadors like the ones who visited the IOA yesterday, so that they can deliver the Olympic message to the millions around the world.

We must not forget "They are our future".

Thank you all!

**ADDRESS AND CLOSING**  
**of the works of the Session**  
**by the President of the International Olympic Academy,**  
**Isidoros KOUVELOΣ**

Dear friends and participants,

After the end of the 2nd International Session for Olympic Medallists, a new era of common action between the International Olympic Academy and the elite of the global and Hellenic sports, will take place within the framework of the evaluation and the propagation of the educational values of the contemporary Olympism.

The role of the IOA with your presence and cooperation is getting stronger and offers a new way of expression throughout your activity as Olympians. In my opinion, during this session although it had a short duration, very interesting opinions were expressed. And the most important thing is that various questions around the future and the quality of the Olympic Movement were asked.

For the above reason, I would like to thank personally all the lecturers for their substantial contribution throughout their excellent presentations. The Olympic Medallists, Ms Sophia Bekatorou and Ms Guin Batten as well as Professor Manfred Lämmer and Prof. Kostas Georgiadis, pointed out, each one from his own perspective, the journey as well as the role of an Olympian athlete from the Ancient years until today. They also underlined the obvious and hidden aspects of such an important personality which from the one hand, consists of a social, national as well as an international idol and on the other hand an athlete – role model in the framework of the Olympic Education, capable of making stronger the educational perspective of the Olympic Games.

On the other hand, in relation to the structure and the organization of the Youth Olympics 2010, my own concern, which arose from what we have discussed in this room, during the Session of the Young Participants as well as of the delegates of

the National Olympic Academies, but also from your own views expressed in these last days, hopefully will contribute to the general questioning we all share about this new Olympic institution. In other words, my concern is related with the role model of the Athlete who will come out of these Games, but also with the procedures which will be followed in order to create children-champions, whatever that means for the young people who will participate in the Games. We wholeheartedly support the initiative of the International Olympic Committee for the establishment of this new institution. The role of the International Olympic Academy is to underline and offer a solution to these concerns which have been intensified because of the doping and the commercialization of sports.

I would like to reassure you, personally, as the President of the International as well as the National Olympic Academy that we intend to stress the quality of the Olympians and the important social role they play through the Olympic Education programs that we support. I know that an athlete's journey from the training field to the Olympic pedestal is characterized by anxiety, worries, hard training and disappointments. But on the other hand you stand to gain a moral satisfaction which comes as expiation at the end of your journey.

My dear friends, only feelings of excitement you may offer to our souls. And we all know this very well. You offer excitement to the audience who glorifies you and wants you by their side, heroes and role models in their lives, lives which sometimes bog down on a couch.

I would like to personally reassure you that these few days we have been together were beautiful. Outside the field and down from the pedestal, without uniforms and medals, we have lived together and we shared our concern about the most important athletic issues in this magnificent landscape of Ancient Olympia and the Academy.

I reassure you once more that I will be next to you. With your cooperation, with people like Sophia and Guin as well as with everyone else we will realise the need of children and young people from all over the world for a life based on Olympic values, sports activity and constant research. There is no honorary closing ceremony speech which can reflect the heartbeat of the athlete who steps on the pedestal. The only thing that I can say is that I am truly touched by this session and I promise you that I will be always by your side having a fruitful cooperation on subjects that we discussed here.

I wish you a nice trip and a safe return to your countries.

*List of Participants*



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